

Appendix 1

Tour of the Oregon Caves Chateau

Projected length: 25-30 minutes

Materials: Two or possibly three photographs, mounted on foam core or similar

Prep work: Make arrangements with concession staff to show spaces such as food storage, the employee dining room (Little D), and a guest room

Suggested stops:

1. Outside main entrance (near the NHL plaque, but positioned to where visitors can compare photographs with cave entrance and Chalet breezeway)
2. Outside the food storage on path next to tree (at second basement level)
3. Inside Food storage (optional stop in the Little D)
4. Dining room (away from tables, but perhaps overlooking canyon)
5. Lobby
6. Guest room (second or third floor preferred, so that room has original furniture)

Theme statement: The Oregon Caves Chateau is an outstanding example of design with nature and therefore a National Historic Landmark.

Significance statement: Integration with one's surroundings (that is, unity with nature) has always been an important part of the park experience for visitors.

Suggested content:

This can be a difficult program to begin outside without some photographs. I start with introducing myself, then quickly summarizing with what historians aim to do (take selected parts of the past and interpret them in light of their importance to the present). This allows for a neat transition to the Chateau being a national historic landmark. I compare the number of properties on the National Register (75,000 nationally) with those being NHLs (some 3,000) and identify why the hotel is nationally significant (design with nature). That allows for a transition to discuss the building site being in a ravine between two streams (one active, the other inactive) due to the lack of places to build near the cave.

To reinforce how things have changed, it is then time to show older photos of the cave entrance and the "bench" on which the Chalet breezeway was constructed. These images allow visitors to get some inkling of change, but also see continuity in the site. This also provides the presenter an opportunity to summarize why, as L.S. Harrison states in the NHL theme study, the prime significance of the Chateau as a landmark is how the designer (Lium) creatively used the limited site and allowed it to dictate major architectural choices. On the practical side, one could mention that three concurrent events gave the Oregon Caves Company some incentive to build a hotel here: 1) construction of an exit tunnel; 2) government appropriations for a lighting system in the cave; and 3) widening of the Caves Highway.

Before leaving the first stop, I make sure the visitors notice the building appears to be only two stories. We then descend the steps, walking by the kitchen door and stop next to a tree. This allows the group to count six stories (hopefully), and I point out how the stream they saw gushing from the cave has disappeared. At this juncture I develop the significance statement a little by talking about why people would want to design with nature in



FIGURE 81. Perspective drawing of the future Oregon Caves Chateau; the existing guide dormitory is shown to the right. (Oregon Caves Company photo, OCNM Museum and Archives Collections.)

such a setting. The Port Orford cedar bark is a good device in this respect and is also very durable. One can also throw out an analogy about the variety inherent in nature, pointing to the varied architectural details (window sizes, etc.). The choices made in naturalistic landscaping might also be identified, through a comparison of the dry laid retaining walls (whose structural function is to permit the building of roads and trails in steep terrain) that allow the growth of moss and fern could be made with other types of material like concrete. We then enter the building.

While passing through the corridor with food storage lockers, it could be mentioned that the concession recycles, thereby linking Oregon Caves with other units in the National Park System. In order to reinforce significance again, there should be some allusion to how Lium succeeded in grouping functions (this being a service area) yet in a building that does not have any regular configurations. If Little D is added to the tour, point out the connection between the kitchen and this dining room through the dumbwaiter. There is a chance that staff at Little D will describe functions of this dining room and how it connects with the rest of the Chateau, perhaps by using the dumbwaiter.

Some warning about the low ceiling is advised when climbing the stairs to the dining room. Since there may be diners at tables, you will probably want to take the group across the stream. The stream is a good opportunity to talk about unusual architectural

features and how the culvert allows water to run through it. Going to the window allows visitors to see where the stream reemerges in the canyon below them. This spot should also allow for a summary of the flood damage that occurred in 1964, and how Gust Lium supervised the crew that put the building back on its foundation. It makes for a fairly epic story of how Lium convinced the company stockholders that the damage could be repaired less than a year before he died. There may be time to discuss change due to flood damage before going up the center stairway.

Once in the lobby, it may be well to begin with why this space is so rich in architectural detail and with furnishings. Some features serve a structural function while others are merely decorative. Take your pick about what to point out; I usually focus on the “hand hewn” beams, the fireplace, and the photographs. The latter can be used to put the Chateau and Oregon Caves into regional context with promoting the Redwood Empire to the south and attractions like Crater Lake to the north. Photos of Lium and Sabin help some people better visualize the business enterprise that constructed the hotel.

The last stop is in a guestroom (the best ones above the lobby level), where the original Monterey furniture can be pointed out and some detail provided about it. By stating each room is different the building’s significance can be reinforced, yet also highlight the use of simple materials such as fiberboard and wood moldings that serve the purpose of tying these accommodations with the park setting. Subsequent changes are evident (such as the sprinkler system and the fire escape) but these are not damaging enough to building integrity so as to disqualify the Chateau for landmark status. The idea of evoking a certain period of time through architecture and why this might be important could serve as a final thought. This allows the presenter to let visitors contemplate the differences between past and present (thereby linking the last stop with what the photos depicted at the first stop), and give added meaning to the word *landmark* as an orientation point to a part of our national heritage.